

# The Spirit of the Holidays

**Story:** The Spirit of the Holidays

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**Summary:** The spirit of the holidays lingers in all of us, though hidden under piles of procrastination, food, presents, family, presents... read with a cup of hot cocoa for best results

# **\*Chapter 1\*: The Spirit of the Holidays**

## ***The Spirit of the Holidays***

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(SBFD)

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When I was a kid, the spirit of the wintry holidays was greater than even the tallest mountains and wider than the ocean... even though I'd never really **seen** the ocean, I could safely assume they were humongous...

I can vividly remember all the decorating we'd do, how the village would shine through the darkness of the night as candles were set up around each house. A specific number of candles for each house, indicating how many new friends or family had been discovered, or a few just to count the happy moments that had happened over the past year.

Though as the years went on, I found the spirit of the holidays passing me by, the holidays seemed less warm as the true colors of the holiday revealed themselves. I observed less and less candles being lit outside the houses each year. Then suddenly one year, the eve of holidays came and I found myself... surprised... There had been such a lack of spirit that year, nobody seemed to even want to observe the few days of the year that are supposed to bring friends and family together for warm, carefully cooked food, and laughter, or just enjoying the company of your relatives at least.

Then, that year of the storm, when I was fourteen, the eve of holidays came again...

The houses were dull and grave. Almost scarce of any life, no candles were lit; no carolers were trying to lift any wafted souls, not even the young children of the village outside in the bitter weather, against their parents' wills, holding snowball fights or building snowmen in hopes of having one come to life. Nothing.

Mother didn't even try to set out any candles for any new friends, new hopes, or happy memories... it was so simple why, yet tradition yanked at me to just set one candle a blaze. To show the other villagers every cloud **does** have a silver lining, that it is always darkest before dawn, and, to quote Garet, "Even the worst SBD will stop smelling eventually".

So that year, I climbed up onto the snowy and icy roof with my candle and match, in nothing but my night clothes. Using the fire from candle to draw energy from, I stood tall on the roof, holding the light high above my head. I saw a few children inch to the window and gaze at what in their eyes looked to be a single star on a cloudy night. Just like the story told to children...

*"Few days before the celebration to bring in the New Year was to begin, the normally very happy people of the village were unusually silent. In that year, they had been taken over and all become slaves. All of their hope had seemed lost, when a young man volunteered to flee from this village and bring them their freedom that they so deserved.*

*Many doubted, for the villages surrounding them were not friendly, to say the least. It would be one man against an entire army of highly trained soldiers and cavalry. None-the-*

*less, the young man set out, vowing to return with their freedom, or die trying.*

*Every night, the slaves would look out the small windows from the drafty barns of which they slept, searching for a small candle light in the distance.*

*Days turned to weeks, weeks to months and months to years, and still no sign of their warrior.*

*Days before the celebration of the New Year, also the 6-year anniversary of the day the man set out, a small slave child spotted a light in the distance, and a single star through the dark cloudy sky. Delighted, the child alerted the elder of the slaves, he pushed it aside as a small child's lies, though the young child refused to give up on the flickering light.*

*The child gathered all the friends he could convince and together, they snuck out of the village with blankets, food and water for their homecoming warrior. They braved through the cold of the night and the chilly winds following the twinkle of light glowing through the dark veil of night.*

*They soon reached the warrior; he was bloody, with scars all about his body, and his armor broken. They immediately offered him their blankets and food, which he took gratefully as they made their way back to the village.*

*The angry slave-masters were at the village outskirts to greet them with whips and blades, but when they saw the warrior, standing tall with the children in the faint glow of a single candle, they feared a mutiny and gathered their strongest.*

*The warrior handed the children the candle which had led him home and rounded the attention of the entire village. He pulled from his pocket, a crumpled piece of fine paper,*

*which he gave to the mayor. The mayor read the letter through, and sighed. He then freed the slaves from their masters and commanded his people to leave the village and explained to them the deed the warrior had brought back.*

*The newly-become villagers celebrated with feasts, singing and laughter, though when all thought it was over, a dagger flew through the air and pierced the unguarded chest of the hero. With his last remaining strength, he did not curse, but instead lit 5 candles.*

*'One to represent the allies I met along my journeys... one to represent the happy memories of one-another we shared through the hard times... one to represent the loving hearts of the children who saved me from the cold, bless them all... one to represent the new family I've found through this village... and a final flame to represent the freedom regained after 7 long years...'*

I saw the faces of the children light up, and some rushed off to tell their parents of the light in the sky... at that moment, I felt like the hero of the story.

And now we're journeying home from the Mars lighthouse after our rigorous perils. We had survived, and hopefully so had our families, new and old.

Once we reached our the village of Vale, or at least where it used to stand, the first thing I saw, was not the ruins of the houses or of Mt. Aleph and Sol Sanctum, but the glow of the Golden Sun over the horizon.

The trees themselves, leaves blown off and branches bare, reflected the light of the Golden Sun, they were the candles of the holidays, the candles of our hope, our love, and all the happy moments we have shared throughout this adventure...

...Although... I don't think all the trees in Weyward could represent ***that***...

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Happy Holidays to all, and to all a fruit cake... not the old ones in the back of the closet, but the ones that actually taste good...

Post-Story note: Since I can't give you guys wrapped gifts this year, I dedicate this to all my friends...

....*Oh, stop complaining*, it's the thought that counts!!! :P